



PRESS RELEASE

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WeAllCount Brings Together Civic Leaders for Spotlight on Need in Downtown San Diego and the Region

Annual Survey and Census Led by Person-to-Person Conversation and Connection

SAN DIEGO – Feb. 24, 2022 – Today the Downtown San Diego Partnership took to the streets with the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) for WeAllCount – the annual census and survey of people experiencing homelessness throughout the region used to identify need and apply for critical federal funding. More than 100 volunteers gathered at 4 a.m. at Civic Plaza to assist with the count in one Downtown census track to spotlight the tremendous need in San Diego’s urban center.

San Diego participates in the national Point-in-Time Count, known locally as “WeAllCount,” by bringing together hundreds of volunteers, including elected and public officials, business owners and community leaders to identify and survey homeless individuals throughout the San Diego region.

“Every year, we know we can count on our community and leaders to support WeAllCount. Not only to spend a very early morning with us gathering this meaningful data, but in the weeks and months ahead as we work together to address the tremendous need in Downtown and throughout the region that is revealed in this census,” said Betsy Brennan, President & CEO of the Downtown San Diego Partnership. “It’s clear today as ever that we will need a combination of both short- and long-term solutions if we are to create lasting change for our unsheltered neighbors.”

All volunteers traveled in small groups guided by an outreach lead to a census track near San Diego City Hall. Through conversations with willing survey participants, volunteers had the opportunity to listen to individuals experiencing homelessness and learn from their circumstances and struggles. Local elected officials were also in attendance to lend support with the count and provide their thoughts on the experience at a press event later that morning including Mayor Todd Gloria, Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, Council President Sean Elo-Rivera, Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, Councilmember Joe LaCava, and Councilmember Marni von Wilpert.

"We are grateful to work with partners like the Regional Task Force on Homelessness who bring additional awareness to the homelessness crisis in Downtown and across the region," said Alonso Vivas, Executive Director of the Downtown San Diego Partnership Clean & Safe Program. "The need is clear, and with the data collected today, we hope the City, County, and community can work together to make compassionate, impactful solutions a reality."

The Downtown census track was one of many volunteer efforts throughout the region the morning of Feb. 24 through the coordination of the RTFH. Hundreds of volunteers dispersed across greater San Diego to count unhoused individuals and to gain a better understanding of factors involved in homelessness. While the Department of Housing and Urban Development only requires a count be performed every other year, San Diego has made it a priority to conduct a census annually. The typical yearly schedule has been postponed for two years because of COVID-19, making this year's count even more critical.

Results from the count were gathered in real time in a data center hosted by the Downtown Partnership and will also be published by the RTFH in an online report. The full report will provide a greater understanding of the region's needs, help improve policies, direct funding, and inform conversations around San Diego's homelessness crisis.

"We knew before this morning's count and early data reporting that the current situation for those experiencing homelessness in Downtown and throughout the region is unacceptable," said Tamera Kohler, President & CEO of the Regional Task Force on Homelessness. "But what we are reminded of today is the unique situations and circumstances faced by each person experiencing homelessness. And our responsibility as a community to take immediate action to help."

In addition to participating in the annual WeAllCount event, the Downtown Partnership also performs a monthly count specifically for Downtown to maintain a record of need in San Diego's urban core. This informs several advocacy priorities maintained by the organization to support solutions for homelessness including:

- Expanding shelter capacity
- Adding safe non-congregate shelter options, including recent calls for a Safe Village pilot program
- Increasing outreach with professionals trained to assist those with behavioral health or substance abuse needs
- Deploying resources in a coordinated, compassionate, and data-driven way

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*The **Downtown San Diego Partnership** is a nonprofit organization that serves as the principal voice and driving force behind the economic and cultural prosperity of Downtown San Diego through membership, advocacy, and public services. It also serves as the managing organization for several special districts including the Clean & Safe program that provide essential public services in the 275 blocks of Downtown. For more information, visit downtownsandiego.org.*